THE SOFT MACHINE

First released as Probe CRLP 4500 in November 1968

1. **Hope For Happiness** 4:20
(*Hugh Hopper, Kevin Ayers, Mike Ratledge*)
Warner Chappell North America

2. **Joy Of A Toy** 2:49
(*Kevin Ayers, Mike Ratledge*) Copyright Control

3. **Hope For Happiness** {reprise} 1:37
(*Hugh Hopper, Kevin Ayers, Mike Ratledge*)
Warner Chappell North America

4. **Why Am I So Short?** 1:38
(*Hugh Hopper, Kevin Ayers, Mike Ratledge*) Copyright Control

5. **So Boot If At All** 7:22
(*Kevin Ayers, Mike Ratledge, Robert Wyatt*) Copyright Control

6. **A Certain Kind** 4:10
(*Hugh Hopper*) Rough Trade Publishing Ltd.

7. **Save Yourself** 2:25
(*Robert Wyatt*) Copyright Control

8. **Priscilla** 1:05
(*Kevin Ayers, Mike Ratledge, Robert Wyatt*) Copyright Control

9. **Lullabye Letter** 4:37
(*Kevin Ayers*) MRS

10. **We Did It Again** 3:46
(*Kevin Ayers*) Warner Chappell North America

11. **Plus Belle Qu'une Poubelle** 1:01
(*Kevin Ayers*) MRS

12. **Why Are We Sleeping?** 5:31
(*Kevin Ayers, Mike Ratledge, Robert Wyatt*) Copyright Control

13. **Box 25 / 4 Lid** 0:47
(*Mike Ratledge, Hugh Hopper*) Copyright Control

BONUS TRACKS

14. **Love Makes Sweet Music** 2:27
(*Kevin Ayers*) Warner Chappell Music Ltd.

15. **Feelin' Reelin' Squeelin'** 2:50
(*Kevin Ayers*) Warner Chappell Music Ltd.

polydor

This Compilation:
℗ 2009 Polydor Ltd. (UK)
© 2009 Polydor Ltd. (UK)

Tracks: 1, 3 & 4 ℗ 1968 UMG Recordings, Inc.;
tracks 2, 5-13 ℗ 1968 Geffen Records;
tracks 14 & 15 ℗ 1967 Polydor Ltd. (UK)

IN THE HISTORY of rock music few bands underwent such a stylistic musical transformation as Soft Machine. Starting life as a band that absorbed Soul and Jazz influences, the group were one of the first to embrace psychedelia before heading off on a jazz influenced tangent. In the course of their history Soft Machine would undergo a series of bewildering line-up changes that would eventually see no original members left within their ranks. In hindsight Soft Machine's evolution could have only taken place in the musical free thinking environment that was the music business of the late 60's / early 70's. It was an evolution that would produce some of the most startlingly brilliant and innovative music of the period.

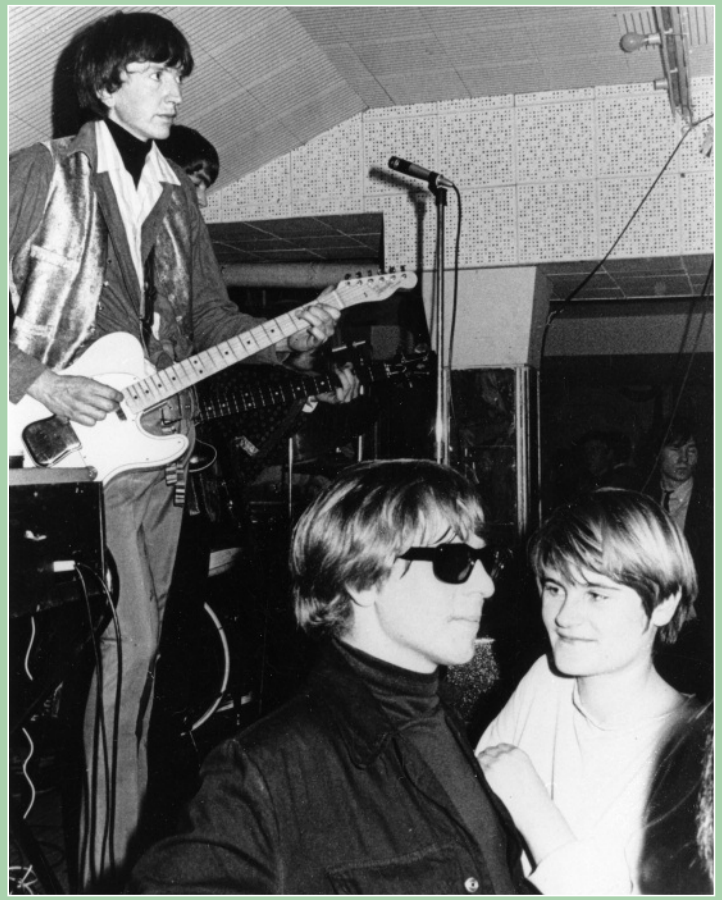
DANCE
Live music
Wilde Flowers
at the
BEAR AND KEY HOTEL
Whitstable
Enter 8 p.m. - Admission 3/6
EVERY FRIDAY

The roots of Soft Machine lay in the city of Canterbury in Kent and the circle of bohemian friends with Robert Wyatt at their core. Gathering at the large Georgian house owned by Robert's mother, Honor, Wyatt shared the company of Kevin Ayers, Hugh and Brian Hopper, Mike Ratledge and a drifting Australian beatnik, Daevid Allen spending many hours listening to modern jazz and being exposed to the world of beat poetry and Dadaist art.

Above: The Wild(e) Flowers first gig at the Bear & Key Hotel - left to right: Hugh Hopper, Kevin Ayers, Robert Wyatt Ellidge, Brian Hopper and Richard Sinclair.

By June 1963 this circle of friends had formed the band The Wilde Flowers featuring Robert Wyatt on drums, Hugh Hopper on bass, Brian Hopper on guitar and saxophone, Richard Sinclair on rhythm guitar and Herne Bay resident Kevin Ayers as vocalist. Wilde Flowers would go through many changes with musicians such as Richard Coughlan and Pye Hastings joining the fold. In 1965 Kevin Ayers and Robert Wyatt travelled to Deya in Mallorca with Robert Wyatt to stay with the poet Robert Graves; lured by the prospect of good weather, blue sea and a

The first Soft Machine line-up - Daevid Allen, Robert Wyatt, Mike Ratledge and Kevin Ayers



two travellers to start a serious band, lavishing sums of money on them in the process.

UFO
FRIDAY, MAY 5th, 10.30 p.m.-Dawn
THE SOFT MACHINE
THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN
& MIXED MEDIA
31 Tottenham Court Road, W.1
Members and Guests Only
THE DREAM BEGINS — Lewis Carroll

In June 1966 Kevin Ayers and Daevid Allen along with Robert Wyatt and Larry Nowlan had formed the band Mister Head and had undertaken a few local concert appearances. The remnants of Wilde Flowers, (Pye Hastings, Richard Coughlan and Richard Sinclair) eventually formed the equally influential band Caravan with keyboard player Dave Sinclair. By August 1966, spurred on by Wes Brunson's encouragement, Mike Ratledge had joined their ranks and a series of demos had been recorded with the intention of securing a recording contract. The name Bishops of Canterbury only lasted a solitary performance before the group adopted the name Soft Machine soon after, taking the name from a William Burroughs novel, with Allen securing the permission of the author to use the name. The earliest recorded appearances of Soft Machine took place in September 1966 at the infamous Star Club in Hamburg where a scheduled three night booking became less than one night when the band was reportedly forced off-stage by a hostile audience. Returning to London Soft Machine performed at one of the earliest Spontaneous Underground "happenings" at the Marquee Club and at the All Saints Hall in Ladbroke Grove supporting The Pink Floyd Sound. Like their fellow musical cohorts Soft Machine began to incorporate long improvisations in their jazz influenced music and were soon described as one of the foremost exponents of "psychedelic" music. Now darlings of the emerging "underground" scene in London, the band were soon regular performers at UFO, psychedelic club nights held at The Blarney Ballroom on Tottenham Court Road. By the end of 1966, Soft Machine and Pink Floyd were London's most talked about groups.

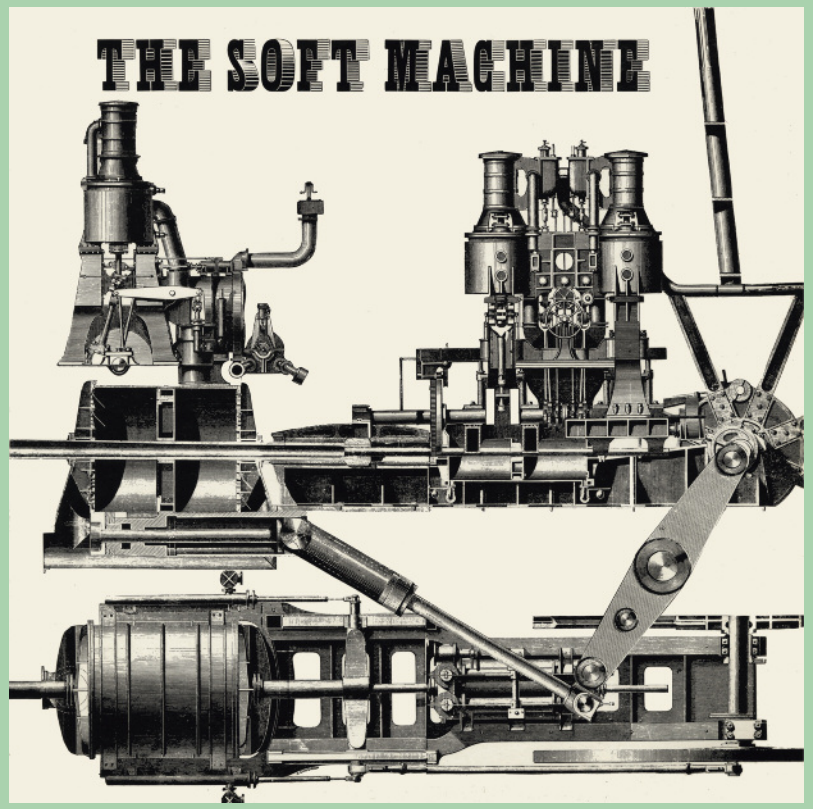
relaxed life style. This trip established Ayers' love of the Balearics and subsequently prompted another visit to the island with Daevid Allen. It was on this visit that Ayers and Allen were introduced to Wes Brunson, an American heir to a fortune who was in search of a bohemian lifestyle. Brunson urged the

Soft Machine play at the Press launch for the release of 'Love Makes Sweet Music', on February 22, 1967 at the Speakeasy.

In December 1966 Soft Machine undertook their first serious recording session at CBS studios in London with American producer Kim Fowley. Aside from the taping of an aborted track "Fred the Fish" (now lost in the annals of time), the session

would produce the excellent Kevin Ayers track "Feelin' Reelin' Squeelin'". The following month a session at Advision Studios (with former Animals' bassist Chas Chandler acting as producer) would lay down the basis of the track "Love Makes Sweet Music" which would be completed in early February 1967 at Olympic studios. Soft Machine's debut vinyl outing, "Love Makes Sweet Music" b/w "Feelin', Reelin', Squeelin'" was released as Polydor BM56151 at the end of February. A remarkable record, it gained considerable airplay on "pirate" radio stations, particularly John Peel's "Perfumed Garden" show on Radio London, and ensured Soft Machine were in demand as a live attraction. In April recording sessions with producer Giorgio Gomelski took place at De Lane Lea studios with the view that this material would form the band's first album. Deemed unsatisfactory, these recordings would remain unreleased until 1971 when French label BYG Records added the tracks to two compilation albums. The recordings would later gain notoriety when released as the album "Jet Propelled Photographs". The same month saw Soft Machine participate in the biggest psychedelic gathering in London, The 14-Hour Technicolor Dream, which took place at Alexandra Palace on April 29th and also featured Pink Floyd, The Move, The Pretty Things, The Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Graham Bond and The Social Deviants. The event gained much media coverage and resulted in a great deal of publicity for Soft Machine, who, despite having only released one single, now enjoyed a loyal following. The summer of 1967 was spent performing in France where the band performed various concerts in and around St. Tropez. Kevin Ayers would later comment; "We'd been hired to perform in a discotheque at a German beer festival on the beaches of the Cote d'Azur. It didn't pay. There weren't enough young people around to go to it, the audience was comprised of heavy beer

At Chelmsford's Corn Exchange, February 1967.



French LP cover

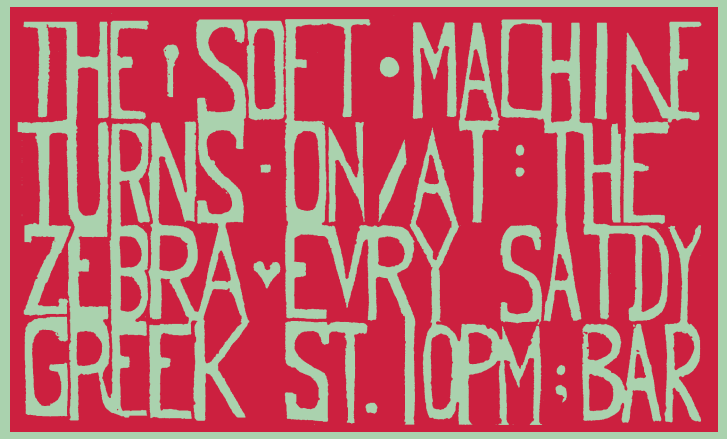
drinkers and they weren't in the least bit interested in the music we were playing. And so we got fired. We were sort of abandoned in the South of France with no money, although we had our gear with us." Soft Machine's luck turned when they were approached a few days later by the promoter of a play written by Pablo Picasso, "Le Désir Attrapé Par Le Queue", at a concert in St. Tropez. Ayers later recalled; "The promoter of this play by Picasso thought it would be a good idea to have us perform to open the show to make more of an evening of it, and it worked very well. So we were hired, almost for nothing, but we had a great time, it was very good." The band also provided music for the play itself and were saved from the prospect of starvation on the road. Indeed, among the further notorious performances given by the band over the following two weeks was a set at Eddie Barclay's Psychedelic Night (where Soft Machine performed "We Did It Again" for over an hour) and an appearance at the "Sunlove" happening in Cogolin where they performed in the nude. Returning to the UK on August 24th, Daevid Allen was refused re-entry to the UK on the grounds that his visa had expired. Returning to France, Allen settled in Paris and would eventually form the legendary band Gong.

Recording session at De Lane Lea studios, in April 1967.

Above: at the Sunlove happening. Below: with Jimi Hendrix

Back in England, Ayers, Ratledge and Wyatt resolved to continue as a trio and secured increasing work in Belgium and France, undertaking appearances on TV shows in Holland, Belgium and France. The band ended the year with an appearance at "Christmas on Earth Revisited" at London's Olympia where they joined Pink Floyd, Jimi Hendrix Experience, The Who, Eric Burdon and the Animals, Tomorrow et al in one of London's last major psychedelic events. Soft Machine soon became more formally involved with Jimi Hendrix Experience managers Chas Chandler and Mike Jeffery, and the band secured the support slot on The Jimi Hendrix Experience US Tour that took place in February and March 1968. Accompanied by roadie Hugh Hopper, the tour was to prove highly eventful, with Mike Jeffery securing Soft Machine a recording contract with ABC / Probe records. Recording sessions took place at Record Plant studios in New York City in April 1968 with Mothers of Invention, Velvet Underground and Eric Burdon and the Animals producer Tom Wilson and manger Chas Chandler supervising proceedings. The music written and performed by Soft Machine is arguably some of the finest produced during the latter days of psychedelia and the first throws of what would later be described as "progressive" rock. Compositions such as "We Did It Again", "Why Are We Sleeping", "Hope for Happiness" and "Joy of a Toy" had all been tried and tested in concert, and on record Soft Machine revealed the extent of their considerable musicianship and creativity. The experimental editing techniques used in the recording process would serve as an inspiration for legions of aspiring musicians over the following decades and resulted in a seamless and perfect work. As is true of most great art, the music contained within the grooves of Soft Machine's first album was to appeal to the select number of music buyers who were

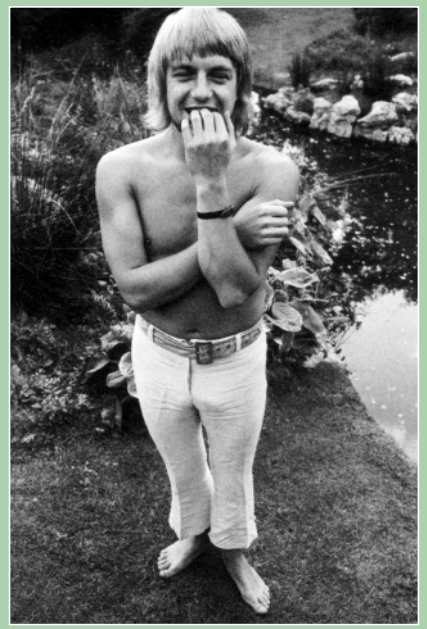
Soft Machine join the Jimi Hendrix Experience on a merry-go-round at the Christmas On Earth event, at Olympia, December 1967.

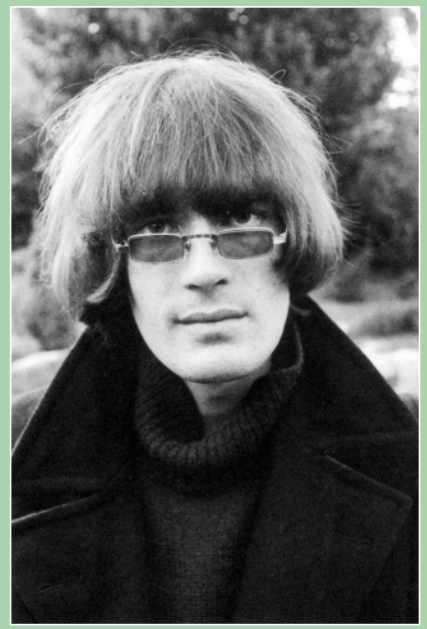


REVOLUTION AT THE ROUND HOUSE, Chalk Farm Road, NW1, October 14—Dance to Live Beat. Featuring: Soft Machine, Open Mind, Elio-Karfenetti and others and flics. 8 til midnight. Adm. 6/6. Tickets from Y.C.L., DME, 16 King Street, WC2, TEM 2151.

"in tune" with the new direction in which popular music was heading. Even more frustrating was the delay in releasing the album in the USA and failure of the album to gain a British release at all, although the album did see a release in France and Holland where it was enthusiastically received by critics and public alike in November 1968.

Despite producing such a fine work, all was not harmonious within the ranks of the group. Briefly returning to London in May, Ayers, Ratledge and Wyatt recruited former Dantalion's Chariot guitarist Andy Summers to join the band for further US dates in the summer of 1968. By mid-July, Summers had departed with Soft Machine now decidedly operating as a three piece unit. The next two months were spent touring with Jimi Hendrix once more, finishing in Los Angeles where musical disagreements began to arise between Kevin Ayers





and the duo of Wyatt and Ratledge. Whilst his band members flew back to England, Robert Wyatt remained in Los Angeles for a few more weeks to work with Jimi Hendrix.

The sheer exhaustion of performing night after night over a two month period, combined with recording sessions, proved to be too much for Kevin Ayers. Fatigued and amicably at odds with Wyatt's and Ratledge's desire to take the musical direction of the band more towards jazz and away from song-based material, upon returning to England, Kevin Ayers announced his intention to leave the band to pursue a solo career. He was to be replaced in Soft Machine by the band's roadie and friend, Hugh Hopper. Ayers spent time in Deya writing songs with an acoustic guitar. He returned to England and recorded a series of demos on a Bayercord four-track tape recorder in Herne Bay. These caught the attention of Peter Jenner and Andrew King, original managers of Pink Floyd and now proprietors of Blackhill Enterprises, organisers of the Hyde Park Free Concerts and managers of Syd Barrett, Roy Harper and the Edgar Broughton Band among others. Signing to Blackhill Enterprises led to Ayers becoming one of the first

Pages 14 and 15: Photo session in Dulwich Park, South London

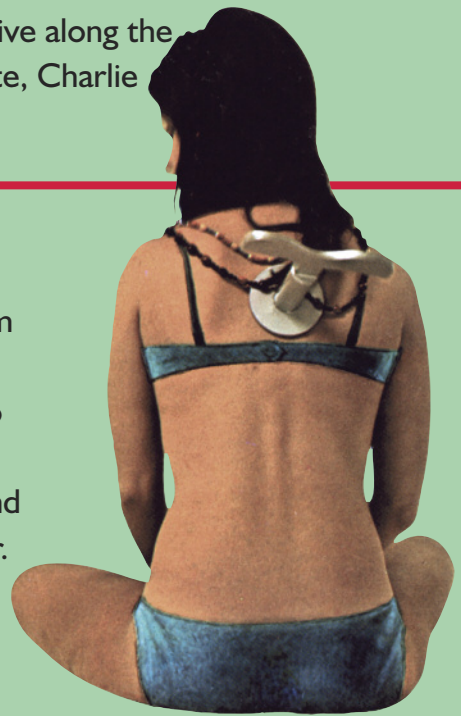
artists to secure a contract with EMI's newly established label, Harvest, for whom he would record a series of wonderfully innovative albums that would cause DJ John Peel to comment; "Kevin Ayers' talent is so acute you could perform major eye surgery with it." In December 1968 this new line-up of Soft Machine began rehearsals for their next album, destined to be another masterpiece.

Mark Powell

Organist Michael Ratledge of Canterbury, U.K. won a scholarship in English at Simon Langton School in Kent, won a prize in Philosophy at Oxford, and took honors in Psychology and Philosophy (1966). Then, applying too late for a grant in graduate studies at an American University (in poetry), he joined an avant-garde jazz group. London was groovin' to rock. Being the kind of person "who does what's there" - in his words - he took the rocky road.

Drummer Robert Wyatt of Bristol, also educated at the Langton School, was tutored by George Neidori in piano, violin, trumpet, drums and stone carving. Wyatt also plays cello, bass and guitar, and serves as the group's lead vocalist. Two summers spent at the Spanish island home of the poet-novelist Robert Graves, a friend of his parents, led to his playing at the Majorca Jazz Club. He thinks of himself as "just a rock-and-roll drummer." But he astonished *The Village Voice's* Michael Zwerin on a drive along the French Riviera by singing note-for-note, Charlie Parker's bop solo on *Donna Lee*.

Lead guitarist Kevin Ayres of Herne Bay, U.K., left school at Essex to see London, became a Canterbury pilgrim (where he met and roomed with Ratledge and Wyatt), and migrated to Majorca, writing songs along the way, experimenting with arrangements, and playing at being an amateur illustrator.



From the original LP sleeve:

Close your eyes and visualize this group!

Children of World War II, long hair, shades, multi-colored, paisley-patterned shirts, offbeat hats, beads, bells and bikini shorts. Three British 'drop-outs' stranded on the French Riviera and sleeping on the beaches. But they have a panel truck bulging with electronic hardware. And soon their sound fills the first half of Jean Jacques Lebel and Alan Zion's Festival Libre at St. Tropez, loosening up audiences for a play by Pablo Picasso, *Desire Caught by the Tail*.

Now, open your ears and listen to their music!

It's a Now sound, swings like jazz, rocks like rhythm-and-blues, hairy with fuzz-box distortion, off-the-keyboard with electronic atonalities - the sound of music updated by the music of sound.

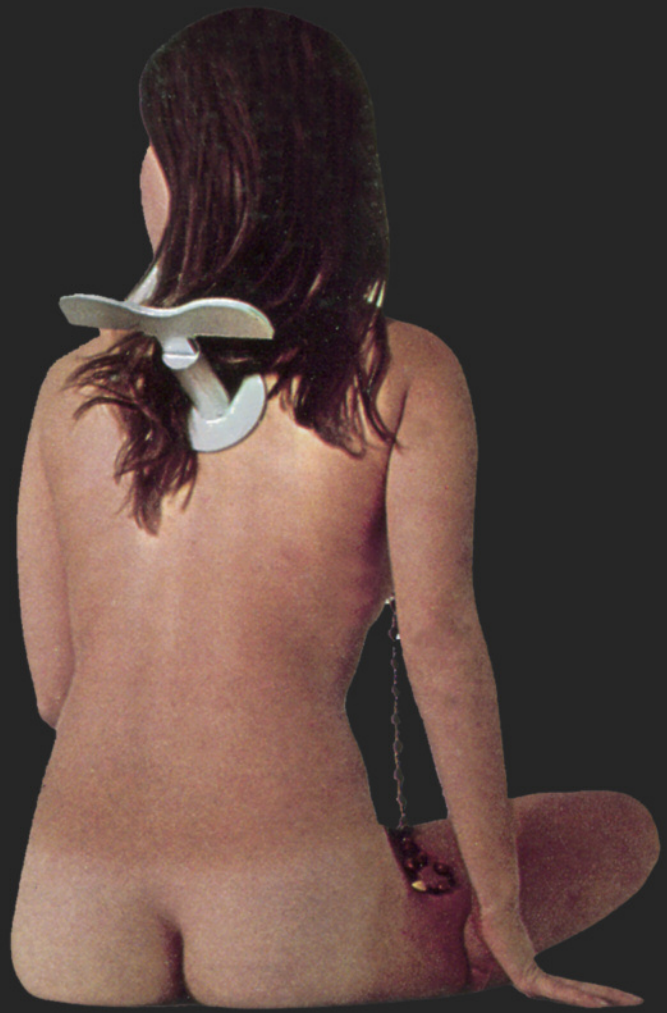
The word-of-mouth, as well as critical panegyrics, from the south of France in American, British and French underground publications, eventually brought the group to these shores. During the past year, it has 'lived' in its panel truck, covering the underground of sound-and-light discotheques, blowing the minds of sophisticated listeners at N.Y.'s Museum of Modern Art, and co-starring with the Jimi Hendrix Experience in a record-breaking, crosscountry tour.

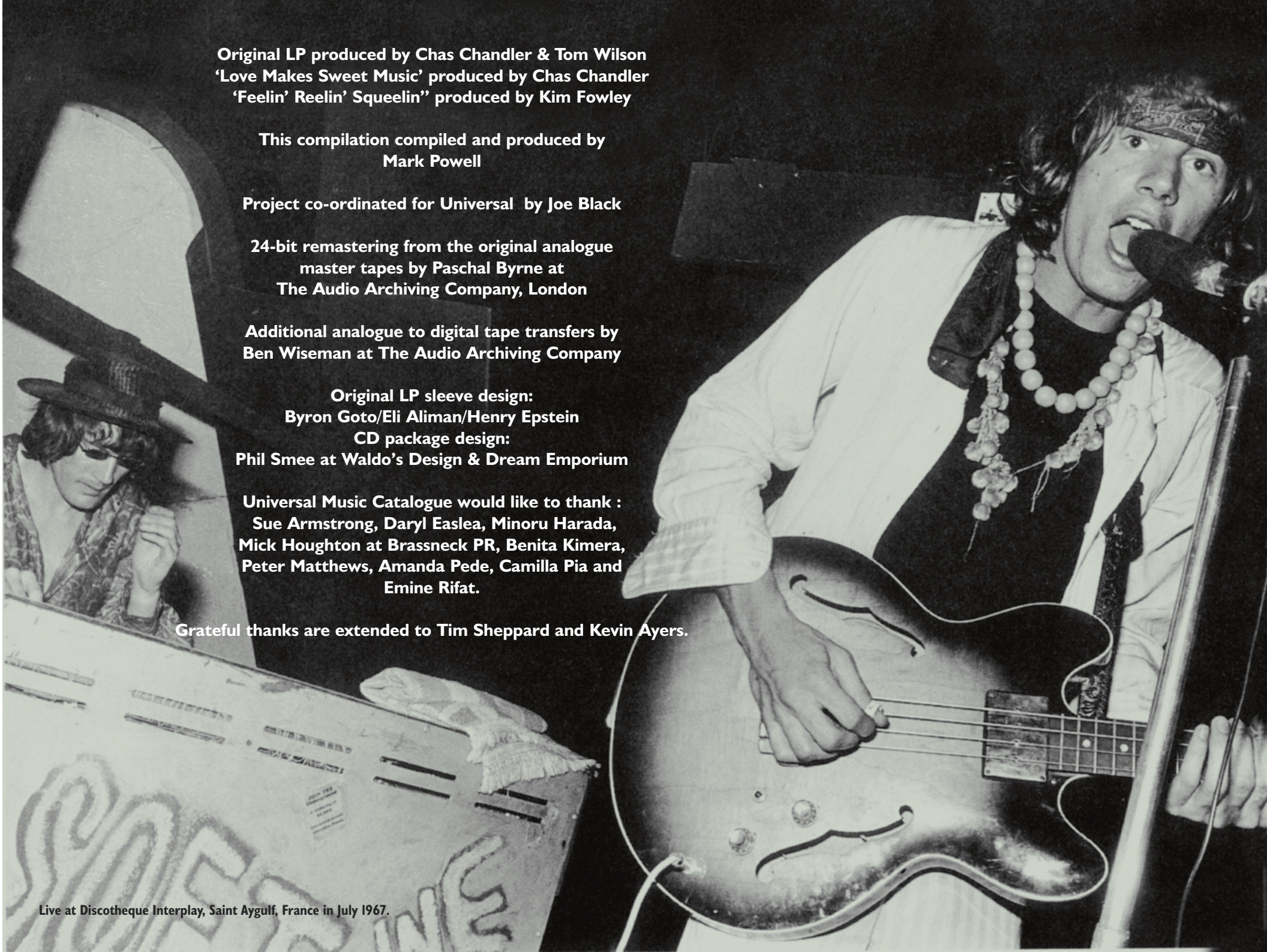
In this, its debut album, the contrast between the group's hippie-crude appearance and its cultivated background, is reflected in the absorbing tensions of the music. The drive is to synthesize the diverse sounds of jazz and rock in an electronic continuity. "Continuity" is the precise word, for even in personals, the group's sets are like suites, with an organ-drum interlude serving as a bridge to the next tune. The lines of succeeding numbers frequently echo, or are developments, as with *Hope For Happiness* in this album, of a preceding number.

"We play hour-long sets," Mike Ratledge explains, "developing a concert style. The compositions are spaced with improvisations from drum and organ and punctuated with songs. The light show diverts the eye from the mind to the bodily functions. Soon, the audience is up on its feet. As the dancers react to the organic rhythms, the regular steps modulate into free form and movement."

The music of The Soft Machine includes the shock values of unstructured composition, although many of their works are songs. Electronic devices add the impact of sensory bombardment. But these effects are mere gimmicks unless they are used with sensitivity and logic. The Soft Machine is an exciting testimonial: men need machines but machines need men and ideas to produce meaningful experience. The group creates music that is meaningful, also appealing, because it has good taste, craftsmanship, and, most of all, involvement. The track of *Joy of a Toy* tells it like it is!

Arnold Shaw





Original LP produced by Chas Chandler & Tom Wilson
'Love Makes Sweet Music' produced by Chas Chandler
'Feelin' Reelin' Squeelin'' produced by Kim Fowley

This compilation compiled and produced by
Mark Powell

Project co-ordinated for Universal by Joe Black

24-bit remastering from the original analogue
master tapes by Paschal Byrne at
The Audio Archiving Company, London

Additional analogue to digital tape transfers by
Ben Wiseman at The Audio Archiving Company

Original LP sleeve design:
Byron Goto/Eli Aliman/Henry Epstein
CD package design:
Phil Smee at Waldo's Design & Dream Emporium

Universal Music Catalogue would like to thank :
Sue Armstrong, Daryl Easlea, Minoru Harada,
Mick Houghton at Brassneck PR, Benita Kimera,
Peter Matthews, Amanda Pede, Camilla Pia and
Emine Rifat.

Grateful thanks are extended to Tim Sheppard and Kevin Ayers.

Live at Discotheque Interplay, Saint Aygulf, France in July 1967.

Hope For Happiness
Joy Of A Toy
Hope For Happiness {reprise}
Why Am I So Short?
So Boot If At All
A Certain Kind
Save Yourself
Priscilla
Lullabye Letter
We Did It Again
Plus Belle Qu'une Poubelle
Why Are We Sleeping?
Box 25/4 Lid

BONUS TRACKS

Love Makes Sweet Music
Feelin' Reelin' Squeelin'

THE SOFT MACHINE

BIEM SABAM LC 00309

polydor
531 448-5

UNIVERSAL UMC

This Compilation:
℗ 2009 Polydor Ltd. (UK)
© 2009 Polydor Ltd. (UK)
A Universal Music Company

The copyright in these sound recordings is owned by Polydor Ltd., a division of Universal Music Operations Ltd. WARNING: All rights reserved. Unauthorised copying, hiring, lending, reproduction, public performance and broadcasting prohibited. Made in the EU.